IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF OHIO WESTERN DIVISION

ROE, JOHN, et al.,	; :
Plaintiffs,	Case No. 3:15-cv-111
-vs-	: :
AMAZON.COM, INC., et al.,	: Judge
Defendants.	: :
	•

NOTICE OF REMOVAL

Defendants Amazon.com, Inc. ("Amazon"), Apple Inc. ("Apple"), and Barnes & Noble, Inc. ("Barnes & Noble") (collectively, the "Defendants") hereby give notice of removal of this action from the Court of Common Pleas of Miami County, Ohio, Case No. 15-cv-00090, to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division, and in support of removal, state as follows:

- 1. Plaintiffs John Roe and Jane Roe (collectively, the "Plaintiffs") filed the Complaint in the Miami County Court of Common Pleas on February 24, 2015, against the Defendants and Jane Doe, a.k.a. Lacey Noonan. A true and correct copy of the Complaint is attached as Exhibit A.
- 2. The following constitute all of the process, pleading, papers, or orders received by the Defendants in this action to date:

- A. Complaint (attached as Exhibit A);
- B. Summons issued to Defendants (the same summons was issued to each of the Defendants and is attached as Exhibit B);
- C. Return Receipt 15-90-3 Issued to Apple Inc. on 3/02/2015 (attached as Exhibit C);
- D. Return Receipt 15-90-1 Issued to Amazon.Com Inc. on 3/02/2015 (attached as Exhibit D); and
- E. Return Receipt 15-90-2 Issued to Barnes and Noble Inc. on 3/02/2015 (attached as Exhibit E).
- 3. This Court has original jurisdiction of this civil action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332, and this action therefore may be removed to this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1441(a), because:
- A. This action involves a controversy arising among citizens of different States. Plaintiffs are citizens and residents of the State of Ohio. (Complaint at 1 ¶ 1). None of the Defendants is a citizen of Ohio. Apple is a California Corporation, with its principal place of business in Cupertino, California. Amazon is a Delaware Corporation, with its principal place of business in Seattle, Washington. Barnes & Noble is a Delaware Corporation, with its principal place of business in New York, New York. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1441(b)(1), the citizenship of Jane Doe, an unidentified defendant sued under a fictitious name, is disregarded for the purposes of removal. Accordingly, the Plaintiffs are citizens of Ohio and the Defendants are citizens of other states.

 Therefore, diversity jurisdiction exists. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a)(1).

В. The Plaintiffs allege an amount in controversy in excess of \$75,000 exclusive of interest and costs. The Plaintiffs allege violations of their right of publicity under Ohio Rev. Code Ann. § 2741.02, and their common law right to privacy. Ohio right of publicity law permits plaintiffs to elect compensatory damages or statutory damages, which may be trebled by the trier of fact. Id. §§ 2741.07(A)(1)(a)-(b), (D)(2). Invasions of privacy are remedied through compensatory damages. See, e.g., James v. Bob Ross Buick, Inc., 855 N.E.2d 119, 124 (Ohio Ct. App. 2006). Here, the Plaintiffs claim an amount exceeding \$25,000 in compensatory damages and \$30,000 in trebled statutory damages. (Complaint at 3 ¶¶ 1, 5). The Plaintiffs also seek an unspecified amount of punitive damages and attorney's fees. (Complaint at 3 ¶¶ 3, 4); see Ohio Rev. Code Ann. §§ 2741.07(A)(1)(c), (D)(1). Courts take into account all such amounts in the removal inquiry unless "it is apparent to a legal certainty that [they] cannot be recovered." See Heartland of Portsmouth, OH, LLC v. McHugh Fuller Law Grp., PLLC, No. 1:15-CV-007, 2015 WL 728311, at *2 (S.D. Ohio Feb. 19, 2015). Moreover, where, as here, plaintiffs fail to plead such amounts with specificity, courts may consider the possible range of damages and fees that could be recovered. See McMahon v. Alternative Claims Serv., Inc., 521 F. Supp. 2d 656, 660 (N.D. Ohio 2007) (removal proper where court assumed punitive damages equal to 50% of compensatory damages); Kolbe v. New York Cmty. Bank, No. 1:10 CV 2006, 2010 WL 5021164, at *2 (N.D. Ohio Dec. 3, 2010) (consideration of attorney's fees is proper where such fees are expressly allowed by statute). As long as "state law at least arguably permits the type of damages claimed, the amount in controversy requirement will be satisfied even if it is unlikely that the plaintiff

can recover an amount exceeding the jurisdictional requirement." *Kovacs v. Chesley*, 406 F.3d 393, 397 (6th Cir. 2005). If liability is found, Ohio law does not preclude the possibility of recovering attorney's fees and punitive damages in right of publicity and invasion of privacy cases. *See, e.g., James*, 855 N.E.2d at 124. Accordingly, for jurisdictional purposes, the amount in controversy exceeds the sum of \$75,000 exclusive of interests and costs. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1332(b) (setting forth amount-in-controversy requirement).

- 4. The Defendants received service of the Summons and Complaint in this action on March 2, 2015. *See* Docket Report for Case No. 15-cv-00090, attached as Exhibit F. Accordingly, this Notice of Removal is timely filed within the applicable 30-day period. *See* 28 U.S.C. §1446(b).
- 5. The Defendants promptly will serve written notice of the filing of this Notice of Removal to the Plaintiffs and will file a copy of this Notice of Removal along with a Notice of Filing of Notice of Removal with the Court of Common Pleas of Miami County, Ohio, as provided by 28 U.S.C. §1446(d). A copy of the Notice of Filing of Notice of Removal, without exhibits, is attached as Exhibit G.
- 6. Each of the undersigned Defendants joins in the motion to remove. Upon information and belief, defendant Jane Doe has not been served with the Summons and Complaint; Doe's consent to removal therefore is not required. See NYCB Mortgage

Although Doe has not been served, the letter from Doe's counsel attached as Exhibit H confirms that Doe consents to removal.

Co., LLC v. Capital Fin. Mortgage Corp., No. 1:13 CV 2678, 2014 WL 535706, at *2 (N.D. Ohio Feb. 6, 2014) (consent from unserved defendants not required for removal).

WHEREFORE, the undersigned Defendants respectfully request this case proceed before this Court as an action properly removed from the Court of Common Pleas of Miami County, Ohio.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ John W. Zeiger

John W. Zeiger (0010707), Trial Attorney Daniel P. Mead (0083854) ZEIGER, TIGGES & LITTLE LLP 3500 Huntington Center 41 South High Street Columbus, Ohio 43215 (614) 365-9900 (Fax) (614) 365-7900 zeiger@litohio.com

Attorneys for Apple Inc.

/s/ John F. Marsh

(by Daniel P. Mead, per phone authority)
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(Fax) (614) 233-5107
jmarsh@hahnlaw.com

Attorney for Amazon.com, Inc.

/s/ Aneca E. Lasley

(by Daniel P. Mead, per phone authority)
Aneca E. Lasley (0072366), Trial Attorney
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(Fax) (614) 365-2499
aneca.lasley@squirepb.com

Attorney for Barnes & Noble, Inc.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing has been served via email and regular United States mail, postage prepaid, this 27th day of March, 2015, upon the following:

David E. Beitzel, Esq., Beitzel Law Office 22 North Short Street Troy, OH 45373

Attorneys for Plaintiffs John Roe and Jane Roe

> /s/ John W. Zeiger John W. Zeiger (0010707)

EXHIBIT A

MINERAL ZA INGRANI MINERAL MANGALANG

IN THE COMMON PLEAS COURT OF MIAMI COUNTY, OHIO GENERAL DIVISION

CASE NO. 15-090 JOHN ROE C/O DAVID E. BEITZEL JUDGECHRISTOPHER GEE, JUDGE 22 NORTH SHORT ST. **TROY, OHIO 45373** & JANE ROE C/O DAVID E. BEITZEL **COMPLAINT FOR MONEY DAMAGES** 22 NORTH SHORT ST. AN ACCOUNTING AND EQUITABLE **TROY, OHIO 45373** RELIEF (JURY DEMAND ENDORSED **PLAINTIFFS** HEREON] VS. AMAZON.COM, INC. 1918 8TH AVE. **SEATTLE, WA 98101-1244** AND BARNES & NOBLE, INC. 122 5TH AVE. **NEW YORK, NY 10011-5605**

AND

APPLE, INC.

1 INFINITE LOOP STOP 36-TX CUPERTINO, CA 95014-2083

Now come the Plaintiffs, by and through counsel, and for their Complaint against the Defendants aver as follows:

FIRST CLAIM

- 1. Plaintiffs are residents of Miami County, Ohio, are domiciled in Ohio and all events given rise to the claims for legal liability herein arise in this venue. The Plaintiffs' identities are not being disclosed as a matter of public record herein as their privacy interests substantially outweigh the presumption of open judicial proceedings. Plaintiffs will be filing motions for protective orders herein to protect their privacy from further public disclosure in the context of what has been done to them by the Defendants already. The practice of proceeding under a pseudonym is well established in Ohio particularly when the actions of Defendants have already resulted in substantial damage to Plaintiffs and would result in more privacy violations and harassment by adding to the negative publicity already caused by the actions of the Defendants. Appropriate protective orders will allow the Defendants to conduct discovery, prepare a defense, if any, and know who their accusers are.
- 2. The Defendants, Amazon.com, Inc., Barnes & Noble, Inc. and Apple, Inc. (hereinafter, the "Corporate Defendants"), are all legal entities transacting business in the State of Ohio and/or have committed tortious acts in the State of Ohio against the Plaintiffs. The Defendant, Jane Doe, is an individual whose true identity is unknown to the Plaintiffs although she transacts business under the pseudonym, Lacey Noonan. This Court has personal jurisdiction over all Defendants.
- 3. The Defendant, Jane Doe, sometime on or before the calendar year 2014 wrote and caused to be published a book entitled *A Gronking to Remember*. The Corporate Defendants, offered the book for sale for in the State of Ohio on their respective websites. The book has and is being offered for sale in both digital formats (e.g. Nook, Kindle, iBooks) as well as in paperback.
- 4. The cover of the book contains a photograph of the Plaintiffs which was taken as part of their engagement journey leading toward their wedding. The photograph was appropriated by the Defendants for commercial gain without the permission of the Plaintiffs nor with the permission of any lawful copyright holder. The Plaintiffs were not compensated for the use of their image on the cover of these books. The Plaintiffs did not place the

photograph on the internet for expropriation as the color photograph on the cover of these books.

- 5. The subject matter of the book, A Gronking to Remember, is less than tasteful and is offensive. The use of the Plaintiffs image has held them up to ridicule and embarrassment. This outrageous connection has been further aggravated when the book, with the Plaintiff's image, has been reproduced in the media nationwide. The book has been shown as a source of ribald humor on *The Tonight Show* and *Jimmy Kimmel Live* as well as being displayed and read before the press at media day for the Super Bowl.
- 6. The photograph of the Plaintiffs contained on the cover of this book constitutes their *persona* to which the Plaintiffs own a right of publicity for commercial purposes. Plaintiffs never gave written or any other form of consent to the appropriation of their *persona*. The use of the Plaintiff's *persona* by the Defendants for commercial purposes constitutes a violation of Chapter 2741 of the Ohio Revised Code.
- 7. As a result of Defendants' wrongful appropriation of Plaintiffs' *persona* for commercial purposes, the Plaintiffs are entitled to the recovery of actual damages, including any profits derived from and attributable to such unauthorized use. In the alternative, the Plaintiffs are entitled to statutory damages in an amount of \$10,000.00.
- 8. In order to elect remedies as set forth in the preceding paragraph, the Plaintiffs are entitled to a full and complete accounting from each of the Defendants.
 - 9. Plaintiffs are entitled to the recovery of punitive damages.
- 10. In addition, the Plaintiffs are entitled to the recovery of their attorney fees, courts costs and reasonable expenses associated with the pursuit of this civil action. The Defendants knew or should have known that they did not have the right to use the Plaintiffs' persona for commercial purposes entitling the Plaintiffs to the recovery of treble damages.
- 11. The Plaintiffs are also entitled to injunctive relief to stop the wrongful use of their *persona* resulting from the commercial activity of the Defendants both now and in the future. Plaintiffs are further entitled to an Order of Impoundment of all paperback versions of the book so they might be destroyed under the supervision of the Plaintiffs.

SECOND CLAIM

- 12. Plaintiffs re-allege as if fully re-written herein all allegations set forth hereinabove.
- 13. The acts of the Defendants constitute an invasion of privacy as that tort is recognized in the State of Ohio.

- 14. The invasion of the Plaintiffs' privacy was done with a reckless disregard for the rights and dignity of the Plaintiff.
- 15. As a proximate cause of the acts of the Defendants, the Plaintiffs are entitled to the recovery of compensatory damages, punitive damages and the recovery of their attorney fees.

THIRD CLAIM

- 16. Plaintiffs re-allege as if fully re-written herein all allegations set forth hereinabove.
- 17. The acts of the Defendants constitute a violation of Restatement 2d Torts 652 thereby entitling the Plaintiffs to the recovery of compensatory and punitive damages.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray for judgment against the Defendants as follows:

- 1. Compensatory damages in an amount exceeding \$25,000 and/or for statutory damages of \$10,000;
- 2. A complete and exhaustive accounting from each Defendant of all monetary transactions arising from commercial activity wrongfully using the Plaintiffs' persona;
- 3. Punitive damages in an amount sufficient to deter each Defendant from engaging in this behavior in the future;
- 4. Recovery of all Plaintiffs attorney fees incurred on an hourly basis in the prosecution of this civil action, court costs and reasonable expenses associated with this civil action;
 - 5. Treble damages;
- 6. Injunctive relief to stop the wrongful use of Plaintfiffs' persona resulting from the commercial activity of the Defendants both now and in the future as well as an Order of Impoundment of all paperback versions of the book so they might be destroyed under the supervision of the Plaintiffs.

David E. Beitzel (0018224)
Trial Attorney
BEITZEL LAW OFFICE
22 North Short St.
Troy, Ohio 45373
Telephone: 937, 440, 9330

Telephone: 937-440-9220 Facsimile: 888-779-7765

E-mail: <u>dbeitzel@beitzelaw.LegalOffice.pro</u>

Attorney for Plaintiffs

Shelee M. Busch (0091954) 22 North Short St. Troy, Ohio 45373

Telephone: 937-829-6697

E-mail: SheleeBusch@gmail.com

Attorney for Plaintiffs

JURY DEMAND

Now come the Plaintiffs and hereby demand a trial by jury for all issues herein so triable.

David E. Beitzel

BEITZEL LAW OFFICE

Case: 3:15-cv-00111-TMR Doc #: 1 Filed: 03/27/15 Page: 14 of 31 PAGEID #: 14

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SERVICE

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Please issue service of summons and a copy of this Complaint to each Defendant by certified mail, return receipt request, at the address for each Defendant set forth in the caption of this Complaint.

David E. Beitzel

Case: 3:15-cv-00111-TMR Doc #: 1 Filed: 03/27/15 Page: 15 of 31 PAGEID #: 15

EXHIBIT B

Case: 3:15-cv-00111-TMR Doc #: 1 Filed: 03/27/15 Page: 16 of 31 PAGEID #: 16

Court of Common Pleas, Miami County, Troy, Ohio

SUMMONS ON COMPLAINT

Rule 4 1970 Ohio Rules of Civil Procedure

Case No. 15 CV 00090

JOHN ROE C/O DAVID E BEITZEL 22 NORTH SHORT STREET TROY, OH 45373 JANE ROE C/O DAVID E BEITZEL 22 NORTH SHORT STREET TROY, OH 45373

Plaintiff(s)

Vs.

AMAZON.COM INC 1918 8TH AVE SEATTLE, WA 98101

APPLE INC
1 INFINITE LOOP STOP 36-TX
CUPERTINO, CA 95014

BARNES & NOBLE INC 122 5TH AVE NEW YORK, NY 10011

JANE DOE AKA LACEY NOONAN

Defendant(s)

To the above named Defendant(s):

You are hereby summoned that a complaint (a copy of which is hereto attached and made a part hereof) has been filed against you in this court by the plaintiff(s) named herein.

You are required to serve upon the Plaintiff(s) attorney, or upon the Plaintiff(s) if he/she has no attorney of record, a copy of your answer to the complaint within 28 days after service of this summons upon you, exclusive of the day of service. Said answer must be filed with this court within three days after service on Plaintiff's Attorney.

The name and address of the Plaintiff(s) Attorney is as follows:

DAVID E. BEITZEL 22 N. SHORT STREET TROY, OH 45373

(937)-440-9220

If you fail to appear and defend, judgment by default will be taken against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

Jan A. Mottinger - Clerk of Courts

Date: February 24, 2015

By: Both a. Lober

Deputy

Case: 3:15-cv-00111-TMR Doc #: 1 Filed: 03/27/15 Page: 17 of 31 PAGEID #: 17

EXHIBIT C



CLERK OF COURT

Date Produced: 03/09/2015

MIAMI COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS - COMMON PLEAS:

The following is the delivery information for Certified Mail™ item number 7199 9991 7031 9698 2357. Our records indicate that this item was delivered on 03/02/2015 at 08:31 a.m. in CUPERTINO, CA 95014. The scanned image of the recipient information is provided below.

Signature of Recipient:

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Address of Recipient:

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Thank you for selecting the Postal Service for your mailing needs. If you require additional assistance, please contact your local post office or Postal Service representative.

Sincerely, United States Postal Service

The customer reference number shown below is not validated or endorsed by the United States Postal Service. It is solely for customer use.

Customer Reference Number: 4276683 33640871...15-90 3

Case: 3:15-cv-00111-TMR Doc #: 1 Filed: 03/27/15 Page: 19 of 31 PAGEID #: 19

EXHIBIT D



2015 MAR 10 AM 10: 42

JAN A. MOTOR COUNTY

Date Produced: 03/09/2015

MIAMI COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS -, COMMON PLEAS:

The following is the delivery information for Certified Mail Mitem number 7199 9991 7031 9698 2333. Our records indicate that this item was delivered on 03/02/2015 at 11:57 a.m. in SEATTLE, WA 98101. The scanned image of the recipient information is provided below.

Signature of Recipient:

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Address of Recipient:

Delivery Address

Thank you for selecting the Postal Service for your mailing needs. If you require additional assistance, please contact your local post office or Postal Service representative.

Sincerely, United States Postal Service

The customer reference number shown below is not validated or endorsed by the United States Postal Service. It is solely for customer use.

Customer Reference Number: 4276683 33640871...15-90 1

Case: 3:15-cv-00111-TMR Doc #: 1 Filed: 03/27/15 Page: 21 of 31 PAGEID #: 21

EXHIBIT E



2015 MAR 10 AM 10: 42

JAN A. MOTOR COUNTY

Date Produced: 03/09/2015

MIAMI COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS -, COMMON PLEAS:

The following is the delivery information for Certified Mail Mitem number 7199 9991 7031 9698 2333. Our records indicate that this item was delivered on 03/02/2015 at 11:57 a.m. in SEATTLE, WA 98101. The scanned image of the recipient information is provided below.

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Customer Reference Number: 4276683 33640871...15-90 1

Case: 3:15-cv-00111-TMR Doc #: 1 Filed: 03/27/15 Page: 23 of 31 PAGEID #: 23

EXHIBIT F

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Search Criteria	15 CV 00090	Docket Entry Images All Dockets Participant Display Exclude Non Option	Search Results Docket Referenc Date e	3/10/2015	3/10/2015	3/10/2015	2/25/2015			2/25/2015	2/25/2015	2/25/2015	2/24/2015	2/24/2015
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	2/24/2015		2/24/2015		2/24/2015		2/24/2015	

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EXHIBIT G

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS MIAMI COUNTY, OHIO

ROE, JOHN, et al.,

Plaintiffs, Case No. Case No. 15-cv-00090

-vs- Judge Christopher Gee

AMAZON.COM, INC., et al.,

Defendants.

NOTICE OF FILING OF NOTICE OF REMOVAL

Defendants Amazon.com, Inc. ("Amazon"), Apple Inc. ("Apple"), and Barnes & Noble, Inc. ("Barnes & Noble") (collectively, the "Defendants") hereby give notice of removal of the above-captioned action from the Court of Common Pleas of Miami County, Ohio, to the United States District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, Western Division. In support thereof, the Defendants respectfully state that on March 27, 2015, the Defendants filed a Notice of Removal in the District Court. A copy of that notice is attached as Exhibit 1.

WHEREFORE, the undersigned Defendants remove this action from the Court of Common Pleas to the District Court and respectfully request that this Court take no further action in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

John W. Zeiger (0010707), Trial Attorney per plan

Daniel P. Mead (0083854)

ZEIGER, TIGGES & LITTLE LLP

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(Fax) (614) 365-2499

aneca.lasley@squirepb.com

Attorney for Barnes & Noble, Inc.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing has been served via email and regular United States mail, postage prepaid, this 27th day of March, 2015, upon the following:

David E. Beitzel, Esq., Beitzel Law Office 22 North Short Street Troy, OH 45373

Attorneys for Plaintiffs John Roe and Jane Roe

John W. Zeiger (2010707), Trial Attorney

Case: 3:15-cv-00111-TMR Doc #: 1 Filed: 03/27/15 Page: 30 of 31 PAGEID #: 30

EXHIBIT H

SHUKAT ARROW HAFER WEBER & HERBSMAN, L.L.P.

ATTORNEYS AT LAW
494 EIGHTH AVENUE, SIXTH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10001

ALLEN H. ARROW
J. JEFFREY HAFER
DOROTHY M. WEBER
JONAS E. HERBSMAN
KERRY L. SMITH
JASON A. FINESTONE
MICHAEL B. FRISCH
ELLIOT A. RESNIK
CODY A. BROWN
JUDITH A. MEYERS*

PETER S. SHUKAT (1970-2014)

TELEPHONE (212) 245-4580

TELECOPIER (212) 956-6471

+ OF COUNSEL

WRITER'S E-MAIL:

dorothy@musiclaw.com

March 27, 2015

James J. Pastore Jr., Esq. Debevoise & Plimpton, LLP 919 Third Avenue New York NY 10022

Re: John Roe, et. al v. Amazon.com Inc, et. al, 15 Civ. 90 (Court of Common Pleas, Miami County, Troy, Ohio, Feb. 24, 2015)

Dear Mr. Pastore:

Pursuant to our discussion, I am providing this letter in connection with a notice of removal that I understand is being filed by certain of the defendants in the above-captioned matter. This letter confirms that:

- 1. I represent Defendant Jane Doe, a/k/a "Lacey Noonan," in connection with the above-captioned matter.
 - 2. Defendant Doe is not a citizen of Ohio.
- 3. Defendant Doe has not been served with the Complaint in this matter, nor has Defendant Doe waived service. I have, however offered to Plaintiffs' counsel to make available Defendant Doe's contact information.
 - 4. Defendant Doe consents to removal of this action to federal court.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

Very truly your

Dorothy Weber, Esq

DMW: jp